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SUBJECT: OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL: RESPONSE TO OSCE HEAD OF  
OFFICE AMBASSADOR PRYAKHIN

11. Post is authorized to present the following statement at  
the May 14, 2009 Permanent Council meeting in Vienna.

Begin text:

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.  
Ambassador Pryakhin, welcome back to the Permanent Council  
and thank you for your comprehensive report on the situation  
in Tajikistan and the OSCE,s activities in the country.

When you were last at the Permanent Council a year ago, the  
Government of Tajikistan and the OSCE Chairmanship were in  
the midst of discussions about the future of the OSCE in  
Tajikistan. We are pleased that these discussions resulted in  
a robust mandate for the Office--with new staff and  
expertise--that addresses Tajikistan,s needs in all three  
dimensions. Since the new mandate took effect, we have  
witnessed an even stronger partnership between the OSCE and  
Tajikistan. This is a remarkable way to celebrate the  
fifteenth year of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan.

The United States fully supports the Office,s work to assist  
the Government in its political, economic, and social  
development. The Office has experienced successes over this  
past year, including completing Phase II of the Small Arms  
and Light Weapons and conventional ammunition destruction  
program, clearing large swaths of land of anti-personnel  
mines, supporting new information and resource centers to  
enhance the business, trade, and investment climate, and  
raising awareness about human rights and trafficking. What we  
find especially noteworthy about these programs is that you,  
Ambassador Pryakhin, and your staff have done your utmost to  
transfer over time the ownership of projects to the host  
country, so that Tajikistan is left with an enhanced capacity  
to address its own security concerns.

The United States is pleased that the OSCE Office has  
responded to calls from the Government of Tajikistan to  
increase the country,s capacity to combat corruption. This  
is a pervasive problem that requires serious and sustained  
attention and threatens Tajikistan,s relationship with  
international donors. We welcome the Office,s new initiative  
to add anti-corruption components to all of its work across  
the three dimensions.

While the OSCE Office has experienced successes, the  
government has not engaged at a high level on human rights  
reforms. We note that the OSCE,s efforts to help develop  
the Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman have been  
hindered by the Government of Tajikistan,s lack of an  
appointment to fill the Ombudsman position. We urge the  
government to rectify this situation as soon as possible. We  
also encourage the government to more vigorously support the  
OSCE,s penitentiary reform program and other similar efforts  
of the international community, among other things by  
allowing fuller access to prisons for independent observers.

In the next several months, we believe the OSCE has a larger  
role to play in assisting the Government to implement the  
recommendations from the 2005 election and to prepare for the

February 2010 election. We hope the addition of an elections officer to the Office will help fulfill this role, and we encourage the Government of Tajikistan to work closely with the OSCE on this matter. We take this opportunity to urge the government to implement the OSCE recommendations from the 2005 election to avoid similar voting irregularities.

Ambassador Pryakhin, as you near the end of your posting, we are thankful for your tremendous work in Tajikistan and appreciate that you are leaving behind a more streamlined, efficient, and effective Office than what you inherited. We are confident that your capable staff will carry on your legacy.

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.  
CLINTON